

Study Guide



Chapter 12, Section 4

For use with textbook pages 375–378

NEW SETTLERS IN CALIFORNIA AND UTAH

KEY TERMS

- forty-niners** The miners who arrived in California in 1849 (page 375)
- boomtown** A new community that developed extremely quickly to accommodate the people of the gold rush (page 376)
- vigilantes** Citizens who took the law into their own hands, acting as police, judge, jury, and possibly executioner (page 377)

DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

What would you do if you discovered a way to get rich quickly? How much would you change your life to obtain this wealth? How would you spend your riches?

In the last section, you learned about the acquisition of the Southwest and California by the United States. This section focuses on how the Western land became populated with hopes of great wealth and religious freedom.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the chart below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about the different reasons the Western states became populated.

	California	Utah
WHO populated the state?		
WHAT did they do?		
WHERE did they live?		
WHEN did they go?		
WHY did they go?		

Study Guide



Chapter 12, Section 4 (continued)

READ TO LEARN

- **California Gold Rush** (pages 375–377)

Almost 80,000 people from America, Mexico, South America, Europe, Australia, and China headed to California in 1849 in hopes of finding gold. The people who came to mine gold in 1849 were called the *forty-niners*.

Many new settlers wanted to claim land in California. The Californios were made United States citizens and given rights to their land by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. However, the Land Law of 1851 forced the Californios to prove their land ownership. New settlers were able to claim the land of many Californios because they were unable to demonstrate proof of their current ownership.

In order to accommodate the growing population, new towns were established extremely quickly. These communities were called *boomtowns*. The existing cities also grew at a rapid rate. Gold was discovered in the mountains of California’s Sierra Nevada. Miners rushed to the area to extract any gold that could be found in the mountainside or in the streams. While the California gold greatly contributed to the world supply of gold, most miners failed to achieve great wealth. Many who did find gold lost their riches by gambling or reckless use of their wealth. The merchants in California did, however, succeed in obtaining great wealth. Due to the lack of supplies, they were able to charge extraordinarily high prices for necessary food and products. Levi Strauss succeeded by creating durable pants that could withstand the hardships of mining. The denim pants were known as “Levi’s.”

Crime and violence were common in the mining camps. The law was often ignored. Citizens of the area became concerned and created vigilance committees. These *vigilantes* dispensed justice without the assistance or permission of the law. They determined if a law was broken and what the penalty should be, possibly death, without regard for the legal process.

Many miners who came to California looking for gold stayed in California to become farmers or businessmen. The population of the territory continued to increase. President Zachary Taylor convinced the people of California to apply for statehood. They developed a state constitution, elected a governor, and selected state legislators. They entered the country as a free state in 1850.

1. How did people become wealthy in California, besides mining for gold?

Study Guide



Chapter 12, Section 4 (continued)

- **A Religious Refuge in Utah** (pages 377–378)

In 1830 Joseph Smith founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, in New York. The New York community did not accept the views of his church. He sought to build an ideal society and traveled west with his followers. He was killed in Illinois by an angry mob. Brigham Young headed the church and led his people out to Mexican-owned Utah. In 1846, 12,000 Mormons journeyed to the Great Salt Lake area in Utah. They founded a town they named Deseret, which is present-day Salt Lake City. The Mormons turned the barren land into farms and sold goods to miners on their way to California.

After the war with Mexico, the United States possessed Utah. Brigham Young was made governor. The Mormons clashed with federal officials. They did not want to be subject to the laws of the federal government. Their resistance almost led to a war with the United States Army. Eventually, in 1896, Utah became a state.

2. Why did the Mormons resist the Utah Territory becoming a state?
